

THURSTON COUNTY VETERANS' ADVISORY BOARD

MEETING MINUTES

April 18, 2016

MEMBERS PRESENT: Donna Lowery, Daniel Miller, Joshua Sanderson, Sean "Smitty" Smith, Tom Stoddert, Gary Walker, and Casey Wegner.

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Gary Aden, Rob Bates, Deronda Thomas, Tom Stuebner, George Sharp, Derek Revisky, Bob Jones, and Linda Loyle.

INTRODUCTIONS

George Sharp with Micro-Enterprise Program passed out brochures. Deronda Thomas, United Way of Thurston County discussed the Fellows Program and Rob Bates of the Crisis Clinic provided program information.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the January 25, 2016 Veterans Advisory Board (VAB) meeting and the February 26, 2016 Veterans Outreach Center Work Session were unanimously approved by the VAB members.

SHELTER CONTRACTS 2017

Interviews for the 2017 shelter bed contracts will be scheduled in the near future. Gary will provide possible dates for board members to interview the contractors who submitted a proposal. The Salvation Army is reducing beds at this time due to renovations and did not respond to the request for proposals.

THURSTON COUNTY VETERANS OUTREACH CENTER

The Thurston County Veterans Outreach Center (TCVOC) sub-committee provided the following report regarding the proposed TCVOC. The representatives reported that the center grew out of discussions held at the June 2015 Service Providers' Conference focusing on One-Stop/Crisis Services for veterans in Thurston County. The TCVOC Board of Directors are as follows:

President, Bob Jones; Vice- President, Gary Walker; Treasurer, Dell Larson; Secretary, Cesar Morales; Members, Derek Revisky, Najila Munshower Neumann and Phil Schulte. The group is Thurston County Veterans Services, Inc. It is now an approved charitable corporation. They will finalize the 501C3 application later.

It is proposed that the TCVOC will provide a coordinated entry point. They plan to transport veterans to other locations and may operate at several different locations. It is planned that Phase I will be the actual operation of the center, including service providers located at the building. The service providers may include Goodwill's Operation Good Jobs and an educational counselor from South Puget Sound Community College. Volunteers will manage intake until funds are available to hire staff. It is planned that Phase II will include Case Navigation for low income veterans.

A Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Lacey and the TCVOC organization is pending. The TCVOC is requesting funding from the cities of Olympia and Yelm and plans to request sustainability funds from the Board of County Commissioners (BoCC). Phase III will include how to sustain services in the future. Plans are for the TCVOC to be a public/private partnership. The center may open at the end of May. There is a board meeting every Thursday at 4 p.m. at the TCVOC. Donations can now be accepted.

The VAB discussed how they might participate in the TCVOC. It was recognized that the advisory board did a great job facilitating this process and the board is ready to end their involvement in the development of a one-stop. The VAB members will act as a resource and volunteer their time to help out.

There will be one more meeting of the One-Stop/Crisis Services follow-up group which started meeting after the July 2015 Conference. That meeting will include a presentation by the TCVOC and provide the opportunity for the VAB to pass this project on to the TCVOC committee.

Both the TCVOC and the VAB would like to meet with the BoCC. Gary Aden will schedule the meetings and also provide sample memorandums of agreement to the TCVOC. The VAB would like to discuss future plans with the BoCC and the TCVOC would like to provide an update regarding the outreach center.

VETERANS ADVISORY BOARD – OTHER DISCUSSION

1. Program Planning

At the next quarterly meeting the VAB will begin to look at next steps. The VAB will consider future plans and goals. It was discussed that some areas that need work are transportation for veterans; organizations/individuals charging veterans to apply for VA benefits; homeless veterans; and recently separated veterans who have no job and no agency help. Joshua suggested receiving direction from the BoCC.

2. Non-Profit Fund

The members will also re-look at the idea of a non-profit fund to supplement the VAF. Prior discussions have included the budgetary restrictions for the VAF; corporate sponsors; and partnering with another organization. VAB members are to give some thought as to how they might like to proceed with non-profit fund development and then discuss at the July meeting.

GOOD OF THE ORDER

It is planned that two former board members, Dr. Mimi Fields and Robert Thompson, will receive recognition by the BoCC and VAB for their service to Thurston County veterans.

Without further business, the meeting adjourned.

Submitted By,
Linda Loyle, Community Program Manager
Veterans Assistance Fund